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Afro-Latinx Transnational Identities: Adults in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles Area

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University of San Francisco

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Master of Arts in International Studies

Afro-Latinx Transnational Identities: Adults in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles Area

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by Koby Heral

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

Adviser



Date

12-21-2017

Academic Director

Date

Nomenclature
(For this study)

1. Blaxican: A person who is racially mixed with African American and Mexican.
2. Community organized spaces: Community events, groups, and/or an available area designated for the community.
3. Democratization: Substantive political changes moving in a democratic direction.
4. Ethnocentrism: Evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture.
5. Ethnographic research: Explore cultural phenomena from observing society from the point of view of the subject of the study.
6. GSTA: The Georgia Science Teachers Association
7. Globalization: The increased interaction of people through the growth of the international flow of money, ideas and culture.
8. Latina/o/x: Interchangeable with Latinas, Latinos, or Latinx means of Latin race or heritage and gender inclusive.
9. Liberalism: The advocacy for the freedom for individual/personal liberties to develop unrestricted modification towards the political, social, and economic institutions.
10. Mestizaje: A person who is racially and/or cultural mixed with Amerindians and Europeans.
11. Multicultural education and curriculum: A practice of strategy and method that helps teachers incorporate different contributions of various groups, histories, and

cultural insights that reflect the changing demographics of their students. This teaching style promotes inclusion, diversity, and self-emotional growth for students.

12. NAFTA: The North American Free Trade Agreement
13. Neoliberalism: Emphasizes the value of free market competition to any ideologic origin; economic, political, and/or cultural aspects of society that are privatized and deregulated.
14. Neoliberal education reform: Schools mandated and accountable to increase number of assessments to avoid penalties and/or gain rewards based on student performance.
15. Pedagogy: The practice of teaching that encompasses theory and concepts that inform teacher strategy, judgment, and decision making that reflect student needs and interests.
16. Urban: The functional form of a global city that is affected by the processes of globalization; the ways of living, relating to people, identity and social organization.

Abstract

This paper examines the identity construction of Afro-Latinas/os/x in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles Area. Marginalized communities predominately Black and Latina/o/x concentrated are at the epicenter of disenfranchisement caused by the globalization of neoliberalism. Neoliberal reforms to education restrain the various nuances of pluralistic teaching, focusing only on the performance of standardized tests thus pressuring schools to center their interest on securing funding. This has greater implications on low-income communities of color where multicultural pedagogy is limited. More importantly, this association of neoliberalism reforms to education affect Afro-Latinx individuals, because they are maligned in the conversation about inclusion. At the core of this research, it was imperative to understand how Afro-Latinx adults understand their identity development. Education and community organized spaces are to be analyzed to evaluate whether a strong identity construction contributes to civic participation. I conducted ethnographic observations of three community events, fifteen semi-structured interviews, and fifteen surveys. The findings from this study may provide clarity for individuals serving to act on these conditions and take action in order to improve them.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Statement Of Study Question

You're pretty for a black girl, you're smart...it's because you are half asian were just a few things people said to me while growing up in a predominantly Caucasian and Asian community. In the community where I grew up, I knew no one that looked like me or came from a similar diverse family like mine. At school, the classes I took never shined light on the major contributions of black people or mixed raced people for that fact. As a scholar, I am interested to know how my experience in school affected my understanding of identity. My academic career revolved around excellence and performance on standardized tests, I discovered that the city where I lived and the private school I attended had its advantages. However, I still struggled with my identity and where I would fit in besides at home. Unlike, the public schools in poorer neighborhoods—I never saw fights break out amongst students, but I heard about the rivalry between Black and Latino students in school. This issue I sought to understand, since majority of the population in public schools were Blacks and Latinos, and they were the least likely to graduate from high school. As a scholar, I have learned that through the disenfranchisement of these marginalized communities, a common practice of racism, and causes of conflict are exacerbated by neoliberalism reforms to education. If the school is where youth can receive an education to become citizens of the 'community,' to become involved and engaged as well as participate in the decision making—neoliberal reforms tarnish that reality by the effects on education (Ross and Gibson, 2007)¹. Young

¹ E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson, *Neoliberalism and Education Reform: Critical Education and Ethics* (Hampton Press, 2007), 8.

people are at the epicenter, often marginalized and maligned, poor and disadvantaged, but they have the potential to take action upon the forces that oppress, constrain, and limit their lives (Ginwright et al. 2006, p333)². How do young people who are both Black and Latinx identify? Do they feel like they have to choose one or another? Do they integrate their racial identity into one as in the term Blaxican illuminates both Black and Mexican identity. And, how are these identities shaped, developed, contested, or redefined in k-12 schools? How are they strengthened or inhibited in community organizing spaces? These are questions that led me to examine this topic more thoroughly in this thesis. I implore through systematic study these similar questions and issues; that brings me to study about Afro-Latinx adult identity construction in community organizing spaces. On one hand, with the lack of proper education to include Afro-Latinx and foster their civic engagement, youth can receive that stability through community organizing spaces. This paper examines how community organizations can foster alternative approaches to identity development with Afro-Latinx youth. This problem brings me to my study, where I focus on two key questions: 1) How Afro-Latinx adults define and understand their cultural/racial identities? 1a) What are their perceptions of Blackness and what are their perceptions of Latina/o/x? 2) What role did k-12 schooling experiences and participation in community spaces/organizations have in supporting or inhibiting the mixed-race identity construction of Afro-Latinx adults? I use Dzidzienyo and Oboler's (2005) conceptions of Blackness and Latinx identity within the racialization of US contexts as

² Shawn Ginwright, Pedro Noguera, and Julio Cammarota, "Youth Agency, Resistance, and Civic Activism: The Public Commitment to Social Justice," in *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change* (Routledge, 2006), 333.

my theoretical framework. I conducted ethnographic observations of three community events, fifteen semi-structured interviews, and fifteen surveys. In addition, this study may help draw attention to more effective ways to support Afro-Latinx identity development in schools/communities, and to how civic participation may be to develop more positive identities.

Chapter two summarizes the various key terms used throughout this paper and analyzes how neoliberalism reforms to education affects the overall operations of schooling and teaching. The issue is how neoliberalism has accelerated divestment in public institutions that disproportionately impact communities of color. This has often meant that teaching about culture, race, and equity are cut out with a focus on content courses that become the only focus of standardized tests. The chapter will seek to explain how multicultural curriculum and inclusivity is productive in the establishment of education and identity construction within school and community. Next, perceptions of Black and Latinx identity are analyzed to distinguish between how these identities define themselves versus how education designate certain narratives to therefore exclude Black and Brown students from a collective contribution to society. Lastly, an evaluation of mixed raced identities probes at an important assertion of how individuals view themselves. On one hand, it is imperative to understand identity construction, while also looking at the development of how one views themselves.

Chapter three is Methods and Results, where the research for this paper is outlined and detailed. I conducted ethnographic observations of three community events, fifteen semi-structured interviews, and fifteen surveys. Chapter four concludes with the findings

of the study. The following themes were of major importance: race and ethnic identity representation in school, policing racial/ethnic authenticity, and identity linked to civic participation. Afro-Latinx adults witnessed an under-representation of mixed race people in school, as well as a curriculum that was reflective of a white American narrative.

Chapter Two: Literature Review | Neoliberalism/Globalization, Multicultural Education, and Afro-Latinx Identity

I examine the literature on Neoliberalism/Globalization, Multicultural Education, and Afro-Latinx Identity to provide context for my research. I look at Neoliberalism/Globalization to contextualize the economic climate that marginalizes issues of race/ethnicity and identity. I look at Multicultural Education to examine the literature on US Schools to understand how communities of color are affected by the neo-liberalization of reformed policies in school and the disinvestment in poor communities of color. Finally, I explore Afro-Latinx Identity and how individuals correlate their identity throughout the spaces and people around them.

Neoliberalism/Globalization

Neoliberalism In Global Contexts

Scholars David Harvey and Karl Polanyi (2005)³ examined how state powers are reconstituted so that privatization, finance, and market processes are emphasized. The way in which these processes have transformed are by neoliberalism, a spread of global capitalism and consumerism. As the expansion of global capital, the economic interventions are minimized as well as state regulations become minimal or less concerned about citizen/human well-being. The private economy and investments vis-à-vis education reforms, political policy, and social framework prioritize the well-being of the wealthy, a small percentage (i.e., 1%), Collins (1999)⁴ uses the United States, that

³(David Harvey, 2005)

⁴E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson, *Neoliberalism and Education Reform: Critical Education and Ethics* (Hampton Press, 2007), 2.

owns majority of the nation's wealth (i.e., 40%). Polanyi (1994)⁵ posits that state obligations to provide for the welfare of its citizens are drastically diminishing as land, labor, and money are seen as commodities and are produced for sale. The responsibility for well-being is held individually accountable, without the state providing those necessary in order to succeed. Moreover, as neoliberalism proliferates through the democratization of state policy and institutional systems put in place for the well-being of its citizens, education as it's the biggest in the global market, face ongoing budget and resource cutbacks and constraints. Scholars Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson (2007)⁶ define neoliberalism as an interchangeable term to globalization, an economic theory of complex values, ideologies, and practices that affect the economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. According to Ross and Gibson (2007)⁷ neoliberalism is another term for global market liberalism. The effects of neoliberalism are seen as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer. The reason for "neo" or new "liberalism" derives from the capitalist crisis over the last 25 years, with shrinking profit rates, inspired corporate elite to revive economic liberalism. Neoliberalism affects policies that have a massive influence on societies, creating social economic inequalities for individuals and other nation-states. For instance, the wealth gap is particularly large for the Black and Latinx population in the United States, due to, the increase in personal debt, low wages,

⁵(Karl Polanyi, 1994)

⁶ E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson, *Neoliberalism and Education Reform: Critical Education and Ethics* (Hampton Press, 2007), 1.

⁷ Ibid., 1.

staggering saving rates, and private pensions (Ross and Gibson, 2007)⁸. These ideologies have expanded globally affecting other nation's political, economic, and social framework also policies and stipulations created by the US government (i.e., NAFTA and GSTS) and international financial institutions (i.e., the World Trade Organization, WTO and the International Monetary Fund, IMF); “have decimated the economies of countries like Brazil and Mexico, whereas local elites and transnational corporations reap huge profits (Petras & Veltmeyer cited in Ross and Gibson, 1999)⁹.”

In comparison to global economies struggling, education and schooling has become a global competitive market for privation because of neoliberalism. Dave Hill situates the neoliberal capitalism is a global phenomenon—restructuring of schooling and education has taken place internationally under pressure from international capitalist organizations and compliant governments (Hill in Ross & Gibson, 2007)¹⁰. Schools in England are competing with one another for students, test scores, and funding, because of the requirements to remain competitive (Ross and Gibson, 2007)¹¹. All aspects of education and educational services are subject to global trade. Pauline Lipman (2011)¹² situates that business management and practices in the United States are mimicked worldwide:

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹²Lipman Pauline, *Neoliberalism Education Restructuring*. (Monthly Review, 2011), 4.

“Globally, nations are restructuring their education systems for ‘human capital’ development to prepare students for new types of work and labor relations. This policy agenda has been aggressively pushed by transnational organizations such as the World Bank, International monetary fund, and organization for economic Corporation and development objectives and performance targets are the order of the day, and testing is a prominent mechanism to steer curriculum an instruction to meet these goals efficiently and effectively,”

An ordeal that occurs here in the states, the market size of schooling and education make it an easy target for privation, creating massive social and economic inequalities in predominately Black and Brown communities. Stephen Haymes argues the differentiation between private and public are racialized metaphors. “Private is equated with being ‘good’ and ‘white,’ and public with being ‘bad’ and ‘black (Lipman, 2011)¹³.’ There begins a trend to disinvest in public schools in Black and Latinx communities and open private charter schools that, in turn, racialize student performance and acceptance on the basis of a standardized test. Haymes posits that failing schools are the product of a legacy of educational, economic, and social inequalities experienced by Blacks, Latinx, and Native Americans; schools serving these communities continue to face deeply inequitable opportunities to learn, including unequal funding, curriculum, educational resources, facilities, and teacher experience (Lipman, 2011)¹⁴.

¹³Ibid., 4.

¹⁴Ibid., 4.

Neoliberalism In U.S Schools And Communities

Afro-Latinx youth identities are marginalized in society and school. According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995)¹⁵, she suggests that for too many African-American students, the school remains an alien and hostile place. Within the United States there remain areas of which Blacks and Latinx are predominately constrained to poor and low-income living. Areas where evidence of “racialization” is apparent in the socioeconomic injustices and inequalities that Blacks and nonwhites face, for instance, unemployment, reduced social services, growing poverty and crime, drugs and human trafficking (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)¹⁶. Schools concentrated in the poorer communities face the biggest budget cuts to education, affecting the number of special needs teachers, closed school libraries, increasing class sizes, and expanding of online learning programs. Pauline Lipman’s (2011)¹⁷ “Neoliberal Education Restructuring,” analyzes how education plays a key role in the social reproduction of the labor force as well as “legitimizing ideologies” of the social order. Education is a way to strengthen democratic participation in society and human liberation; however, the crisis of global capital and neoliberal state policies threatens the social order based on human liberation (Lipman, 2011)¹⁸. The United States introduced curricular reforms; No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Common Core (state standardized initiative of 2010) to reduce learning and skills taught but

¹⁵Gloria Ladson-Ladson-Billings, “But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.” in *Theory Into Practice* (Ohio State University, 1995), 161.

¹⁶Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 3.

increased testing based on the promotion of privatization and fees placed on public education. The NCLB Act of 2001 commodified public education by reducing learning to bits of information and skills to be taught and tested and marketize education through programs that promote privatization and users fees in place of free, public education (Ross and Gibson, 2007)¹⁹. The pressure on low-income schools is unfair considering the existing socioeconomic inequalities related to that particular area. Neoliberal education reforms convert educational services market to become a for-profit institution (ie. Charter schools, Edison Schools, and private schools). Authors Ross and Gibson (2007)²⁰ explain Mathison's theory that expecting one to perform well without ensuring that they can and for them not to do well, to say there is planned remedy is accountability:

“Whether the stakes are high or low and whether the locus of control is local, state, or national, this strategy is one where a distant authority sets performance goals for students, schools, or school system; hold individuals and units directly accountable for meeting the goals; and consequences are applied, including rewards for meeting performance goals and sanctions for not meeting them.”

The ramifications of a low-income school are a product of excessive budget cuts, closing of schooling libraries, reducing the number of special needs teachers, increasing class size, expanding online learning programs and home schooling. According to Ross and Gibson (2007)²¹, this forthwith intensifies the workload for teachers and isolates them

¹⁹E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson, *Neoliberalism and Education Reform: Critical Education and Ethics* (Hampton Press, 2007), 4.

²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

from decision making and from one another. School and education are perceived as components to the labor market, as a production of individual(s) to sustain a labor force, neoliberal global capitalism contradicts that very aspect. Pauline Lipman (2011)²² stated that serious disinvestment in public education hurts the workforce, having major implications for social stability, with more students dropping out. Lipman warns of the danger restructuring public education, yet she promotes reshaping the struggle, for a new social order based on human liberation.

The foundation of human liberation is shaped in the form of civic societal movement, for example, Chicago's urban schools in Black and Latinx communities were subjugated to disinvestment, privatization, and gentrification. The students that remained in the public schools were devalued and struggled as the proliferation of charter schools received more funding. Local communities, parents, and students had enough, thereby they rallied together and protested to the school board to put money back into public education. Some individuals were compelled to do a hunger strike until the board was ready to hear their demands. Lipman explains that organized resistance to neoliberal policies has prevented some school from closing, and in the case of Chicago's urban schools the community engendered a progressive caucus that won the leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union (Lipman, 2011)²³. Human liberation as a means to promote Gramsci's theory of "good sense," defends public education on the concerns of the people against the ideological construction of hegemonic social alliances (Lipman, 2011)²⁴. To

²²Lipman Pauline, *Neoliberalism Education Restructuring*. (Monthly Review, 2011), 8.

²³Ibid., 11.

²⁴Ibid., 7.

elucidate Lipman's human liberation in protection of public education, Lipman is aware that although public services like education and other state service institutions serve to bring justice and empowerment. They also persist in various inequalities and exclusions.

Human liberation against neoliberal education reform requires acknowledging the inequalities and exclusion within public services, especially in schools and education. It requires resisting neoliberal policies from generating a problematic space for students to learn and become critical scholars. When civic participation from parents, teachers, and students create a movement against a system that is unresponsive to their needs, they resist becoming the marginalized and oppressed people—the very agency that can contest proprietary and defend their alliance against a historically saturation of inequality and exclusion.

Multicultural Education

Under the constraints of neoliberal education reform, multicultural schools are a small number in low-income communities of color. Public education—at this time—focus contributions from Blacks and Latinx as exploitive to the foundation of the United States, a glossed over history of the achievements compared to the overconsumption of how much White Americans benefit and advance in a society that privileges their growth. That growth is the fostering of identity; of which branches towards civic engagement and participation, how do education or schooling and/or community space support or inhibit identity construction/development? Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995)²⁵ critical analysis on 'cultural relevancy' research the linkage between school and culture. This segues into

²⁵Gloria Ladson-Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." In *Theory Into Practice* (Ohio State University, 1995), 160.

how neoliberalism in the global context affects schools and education, how it limits the democratization of an inclusive teaching style and shifts more to a commodified standard of teaching that alienate students of color. A culturally relevant pedagogy has three propositions:

- 1) Students must experience academic success,
- 2) Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence,
- 3) Students must develop a critical consciousness, in order, to challenge the status quo of the current social order.

Ladson-Billings' cultural relevancy depicts a humanistic approach to understanding academic pedagogy. It's the search for the "right" teaching strategies and humanizing pedagogy that respects, uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an internal part of educational practice (Bartolome as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995)²⁶.

Shawn Ginwright, Pedro Noguera, and Julio Cammarota (2006)²⁷ speak about this cultural relevancy in their case study about youth activism and community change. They discuss how inclusion and exclusion are invisible, pervasive, and effective forms of making social and cultural distances. More importantly, without inclusion, there is a leveraging of privilege—that maintain unequal forms of capital. Conceptualizing teaching mechanisms to be inclusive is what Hasan Arslan and Georgeta Rață (2013)²⁸

²⁶Ibid., 160.

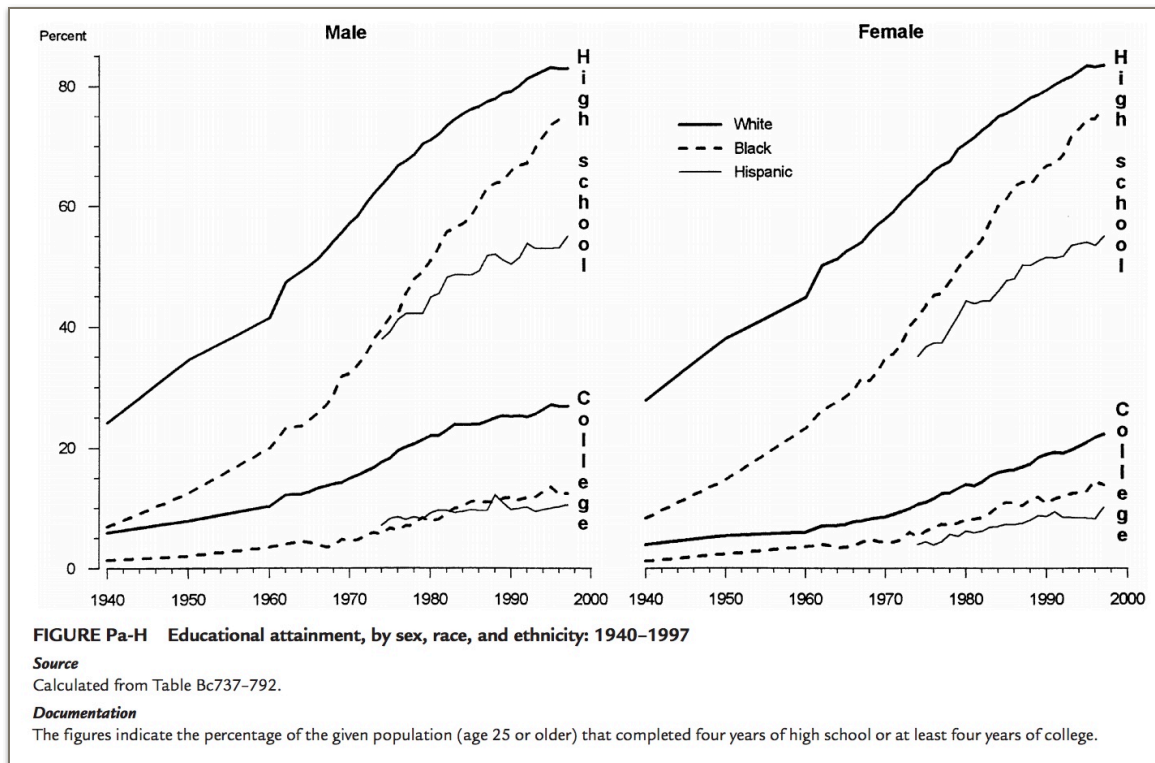
²⁷ Shawn Ginwright, Pedro Noguera, and Julio Cammarota, "Youth Agency, Resistance, and Civic Activism: The Public Commitment to Social Justice," in *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change* (Routledge, 2006), 84.

²⁸ Hasan Arslan and Georgeta Rață. 2013. *Multicultural Education: From Theory to Practice*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 3

define as multicultural education—the idea that all students, regardless of their social class, race, ethnicity, religion or gender characteristics, should have an equal opportunity and freedom to learn. Arslan and Rață postulated the idea that education systems should develop more of a humanistic approach to meet the learning needs and provide an equal opportunity for students of multi-ethnic and cultural backgrounds to truly be involved in their learning experience.

Cultural relevancy incorporates student's needs, values, and skills into the teaching aspect of academics. For instance, Ladson-Billings' study observed classrooms that predominately had Black students and students of color with white teachers. In one classroom, the teacher saw an opportunity to develop a group's influence into a positive social force in the class, she challenged the boys to use their academic power on issues and ideas that were relevant to them. The result was positive, the students engaged more in the class and had a positive influence on their peers, more importantly a positive relationship with the teacher. Instead of the teacher having an antagonist relationship with the group of boys, the teacher engaged them in a way that channeled their academic ability versus having to reprimand their behavior (Bartolome in Ladson-Billings, 1995)²⁹. Students of color particularly Black male students are under the radar for bad distributive behavior at an early age in school. Black students are viewed and labeled as a 'problem,' and corrective behavior or punishment is prescribed over positive academic leadership. Scholars Susan B. Carter, Michael R. Haines, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright charted race and ethnicity populations in education. The chart is a depiction of educational

²⁹Gloria Ladson-Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." In *Theory Into Practice* (Ohio State University, 1995), 160.



attainment by sex, race, and ethnicity between the years of 1940-2000. It shows that Blacks and Hispanics have a lower percentage throughout the years in educational attainment in comparison to Whites (Carter, Haines, Sutch, and Wright, 2006)³⁰.

The pressures that Black students face come from external and internal environments. Outside of school, student of color living in low-income communities are ostracized by the political, economic, and social inequalities of neoliberal policy and reform. Likewise, internal pressures happen within public service institutions like school. Ladson-Billings (1995)³¹ cites Fordham and Ogbu who critique how Black students face

³⁰ Carter, Susan B. , Michael R. Haines , Richard Sutch and Gavin Wright , "Race and Ethnicity Population, Vital Processes, and Education" in Introduction A of *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition*, edited by Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, Alan L. Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

³¹ Gloria Ladson-Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." in *Theory Into Practice* (Ohio State University, 1995), 161.

ridicule for “acting white,” and expressing interest in academics would be acting outside of Black culture. Ladson-Billings (1995)³² submitted that teachers who utilize cultural relevancy operate student’s culture as a vehicle for learning; for example, the teachers in her study bridged school learning with cultural competence—using what students knew and correlated that of academic knowledge in the arts, literature, and English. Apart from empowering students of color in becoming critical thinkers, school and education are platforms that can inspire as a representation for the communities. Lipman mentions this as cultural relevancy in the teaching representation, teachers of color that understand the needs of their students because they themselves operate in the dual worlds of their home community and white community (Ladson-Billings, 1995)³³. These teachers saw themselves as a part of the community and teaching as a way to give back to the community. Cultural representation can encourage students to be inspired and to learn from one another. Assaf Meshulam and Michael W. Apple explore how the increased commodification of education brings challenges for schools trying to dismantle the archaic socio-historical contexts of teaching.

Moreover, areas weakened by the “othering” because of racism or discrimination are areas in which inequity prevail and those who suffer are African-Americans and the Latino/Latina populations (Meshulam and Apple, 2006)³⁴. The aftermath of Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) and the Bilingual Education Act (1968) was a direct approach

³² Ibid., 161.

³³ Ibid., 162.

³⁴ Assaf Meshulam and Michael Apple. 2014. Interrupting the interruption: Neoliberalism and the challenges of an antiracist school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 653.

to incorporating minorities, people of color, into the discourse on social democratization, platforms like public education. However, issues of discrimination, racism, and exacerbated forms of inequity for Blacks and other people of color in the wake of a civil rights movement were broadened. Meshulam and Apple analyzed a US public elementary bilingual, multicultural school where parents, teachers, and faculty collectively designed a school with a program that stood against every racialized policy that inhibited Black and Latinos students from receiving a proper education. The school's curriculum, developed because of a grassroots activist movements, operated to function in conjunction with an integrated community to break down racism, gender inequities, the politics of sexuality (Meshulam and Apple, 2006)³⁵. The need for multicultural education comes from the rise of ethnocentrism. The becoming of ethnic consciousness and the awareness of socioeconomic injustices affect one's fostering of identity.

The practice of a multicultural curriculum means to challenge racism and forms of biases, Meshulam and Apple (2006)³⁶ reference a founding educator; they expressed: 'the ideas and the ideals that students are learning will be things that the students will take out into the culture, in the main predominantly White culture and maybe make some changes.' Although, multicultural education and curriculum happen to sound transformative it's the practice and the logistics of the approach that limit such implementation. Certain content and textbook material require teachers to sift through selective works, but also requires time for them to develop significant curriculum,

³⁵ Ibid., 655.

³⁶ Ibid., 657.

methods, and pedagogy that are necessary for a multicultural teaching practice. The school that Meshulam and Apple (2006)³⁷ studied supported teacher curriculum development by devoting one full day a week to curriculum planning in each grade level, allowing teachers to meet for team teaching and curriculum development. The only challenge for the school was funding, particularly for full-time special-subject instructors; the time to train new instructors on curricular framework had to be prioritized and functional for years to come. Meshulam and Apple describe these challenges as a result shift in district ideology towards neoliberal policies and goals, proving to be not immune to the pervasiveness of the unequal structure, in this case, of the race relations in the US society. The school allocated resources and time to including race, culture, gender, sexuality into the conversation, but were pressured to focus on standards, test scores, and achievement assessment. District requirements restrict the creativity of multicultural curriculum and pressured the school to conform to the hegemonization of neoliberalism. The school relished to convey a positive meaning for students as inclusively as possible. However, according to Meshulam and Apple (2006)³⁸, “The ascent of the neoliberal agenda in public education impacted budget and resource allocation at the school and forced compromises in its programs and an adjustment of priorities.” The commodification of knowledge has a greater impact on the development of Black and Latinx students. Any multicultural education program seeks to equalize the experience of

³⁷ Ibid., 658.

³⁸ Ibid., 659.

education, in Meshulam and Apple's study, the school confronted the deep-rooted racial structure of neoliberalism in an educational space.

Neoliberal education reforms directed blame or accountability onto the students and the school itself. It significantly deters community relationships with Black and Brown students; as increased pressures of performance ranks equated to better funding is targeted with punishment for lower performing schools. Meshulam and Apple observed in the school's inability to hire parents, community members, people of color as a positive representation for Black and Latinx students. Members of the community working in the school had a positive impact on students, to witness a collation within the community to give back. Unfortunately, budget cuts forced the school to let go certain staff including the parents and community members. The choice was made to let go Black staff first which only exacerbated racial tensions among Black and Latinx students. Furthermore, the school's non-hegemonized curriculum contends to help foster student's ability to be critical thinkers in a society that is white centered, but is restrained in doing so for a number of problematic reasons. "Even in this school—whose vision, collaborative ethos, and curriculum contents embody recognition, redistribution, and equal representation—inequalities and racializing power relations have been produced in important ways. In these circumstances, what was meant to be a powerful educational challenge to dominance is significantly weakened (Meshulam and Apple, 2006)³⁹." The school exemplifies how neoliberalism inherently racializes in its foundation to recreate the citizen as consumer, but what affect does this have on Black and Latinx students? The

³⁹ Ibid., 665.

relationship between students and the school initially was to improve representation as a collective community, so how can student's representation or identity be constructively developed? Under the constraints of the neoliberal education policy, are there other forms for which students of color can gain constructive development? Can community spaces support one's sense of identity, to further contribute to one's involvement in the community or being an active member of society? If any conclusions may be drawn from this research, it is clear that identity is the contributor to civic participation, in other words, one's involvement in society as a critical thinker and one's potential engagement with whitely centered policy.

The discourse on Black and Latinx participation in society has been studied; however, generally a conversation about mixed raced identity, particularly for Afro-Latinx identity, can bridge the understanding of neoliberal policy, education, and identity construction. This study has implications for how education/schooling and or community spaces could better support identity construction with young Afro-Latinxs.

Afro-Latinx Identity

Perceptions And Narratives Of Black And Latinx Identity

It is imperative to connect the mentioned bodies of literature to the reference of Afro-Latinas/os or Black, for it is a relatively new context of ethnicity and race. Mexico among other Latin American countries did not include populations with African origins in the official national census. According to Mexico's chief statistical agency, about 1.4 million Mexicans self-identified as Black or of African descent based on their culture,

history or customs (Lopez and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2016)⁴⁰. Blacks and Black identity is a complicated term, in particular, self-identification and how “Blackness” is perceived is subjective. Authors Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler (2005)⁴¹ write that in contemporary we are reshaping how we think about color and phenotype as well as racialization. They define the term “racialization” by Darder and Torres, as the use of race in structuring social relations in the United States today. More specifically, Dzidzienyo and Oboler are examining how Blackness and racialization are framed in the Americas and in the United States context. The authors use terms like “resolved” and “enslaved in legacies of the past” to describe how negative ideologies about Blackness are carried into the present. Indeed, like our new global context, these ideas are grounded in the international exacerbation of the economic and political principles of late-nineteenth-century imperialism and its ongoing consequences in the Americas (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁴². Dzidzienyo and Oboler define disenfranchisement of people in the Americas, as the painful contrast of wealth and sophistication, technology, and high standards of living allotted for the elites, the elites of lighter skin (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁴³. The commonality of racism is a shared collective experience. This collectiveness becomes a mobilization of social movements; an example of belonging, ‘to belong’ and what it means for Black Latin Americans and Blacks.

⁴⁰ Lopez and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2016

⁴¹ Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 4.

⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

On the other hand, while the stigma of Blackness is similar throughout the global hemisphere, the experience of Blackness is heterogeneous depending on the historical and cultural characteristics as well as the demographic composition of each country (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁴⁴. A common practice of racism is the misconceptions about Blackness. “We have often been frustrated by the lack of available texts [e.g. teaching courses] focusing specifically on the contemporary experience of Blacks, Latinas/os, and Afro-Latin Americans in this hemisphere (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁴⁵.” The authors distinguish the significance of teaching about Blackness, in relation to slavery and post-abolition era as important and valuable; however, not entirely useful or productive in contemporary politics, relations of power building for Blacks and Latinx in the United States.

The notion of perceptions and narrative are explored by authors Cinthia Salinas and Jeanette Alarcón; they examine the use of critical notions of historical inquiry and knowledge of historical narrative as a tool to disrupt homogenous histories and themes, to promote civic participation among marginalized communities (Salinas and Alarcón, 2016)⁴⁶. Culturally relevant pedagogies are imperative in framing identities in civic engagement. Salinas and Alarcón (2016)⁴⁷ observed that students bring to class their own race, class, and gendered biographies with them. This means that what is taught in the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Salinas, Cinthia, and Jeannette D. Alarcón. 2016. "Exploring the Civic Identities of Latina/o High School Students: Reframing the Historical Narrative." *International Journal Of Multicultural Education* 18, no. 1: 68.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 69.

text is not a replica of what is being learned. Yet, despite this newfound examination of reshaping race, color, and phenotype, what is the significance? What are Afro-Latinx perceptions of Blackness, and latino/a/x? Above all, how can academic literature expand to understanding Black and Latino relations? Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005)⁴⁸, admit that different factors can be discussed while examining Black and Latinx relations and affect the outcomes depending on how it is studied, (e.g., factors regarding historical moments, individual and collective experiences, class, and local variations). The authors mention that relation tensions are caused by political and socioeconomic strain, that increased as Blacks fought for civil rights to finally participate in the: limited opportunities, services, and resources—that soon became advancements for the minority pie (i.e., immigrants and Latinos). “Blacks see or fear the dwindling of political representation earned in long and hard struggle—Latinos meanwhile, use the same arguments of Blacks to claim representation (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁴⁹.” Resources to Blacks were programs that promoted an exclusive agenda and movement—that encompasses a monoracial struggle. Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005)⁵⁰ highlight three main factors causing a separation of the races:

- 1) distribution of the gains resulting from the civil rights and similar movements,
- 2) the increasing diversity of the two communities, and perhaps most important,
- 3) the nature of white mediation.

⁴⁸Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 159.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 164.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 164.

The civil rights movement, according to Fred Barbaro, caused minority groups to break up and move inward rather than work together in a common struggle (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁵¹. Different groups created their own movement and community building, all rallying to fight for equal representation and opportunity in a white centered society. Inequality and disenfranchisement are conditions to some varying degree of non-white experiences.

The resources for specific groups begin to unsustainably support not one but every group. Likewise, the increase diversity of immigration minorities cause competition within a concentrated environment (i.e., central cities). Dzidzienyo and Oboler indicate that paying action to White monopoly of resources and opportunities and the decisions of Whites to leave cities and minorities behind, are ways to reason as a collective group. “Minorities did not cause their concentration, their condition, lack of opportunity, or distribution of society[...]We should look at the conflicts associated with concentration and growth (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁵².” The conflict Dzidzienyo and Oboler describe as a problem, is defined as a racial problem—one that blames or holds an individual accountable under the poor and unfair constructed circumstances.

The foundation of the United States was built off the exploitation of Blacks and minorities; however, Whites have established power to monopolize the benefits while putting in place a structure of ongoing white privilege (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁵³. The power to distribute resources creates contention amongst minorities, that generates a

⁵¹ Ibid., 165.

⁵² Ibid., 165.

⁵³ Ibid., 165.

falsified common plight. Black and Latinx relation is a one-way discourse and conflict resolution needs to be a deeper structural solution. Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005)⁵⁴ propose that Blacks and Latinx need to confront the antithetical definition of their identity—the stereotypes and constructs socializing them about and against each other, structural mechanisms of race-based exclusion, and their internalization of alienation. Consequently, the search for identity and separate agency on the part of each racial group reflects real differences and unique needs (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁵⁵. Thus literature and conversations about mixed raced identities can transition strategies of cooperation and coalition, to a collective movement against the non-white struggle. Mixed raced identities, specifically Afro-Latinx, embrace common struggles by blending many historical sources at once—this perspective conceptualizes how Black and Brown can create coalitions (Rebecca Romo, 2017)⁵⁶. “We cannot build justice on the basis of suppression of the other; rather, we must accept all groups as legitimate and equal subjects and partners (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁵⁷.” Therefore, before Black and Brown communities can coalesce to build justice, the conversation about race and identity needs examination. Scholars Paul Spickard, Rudy Guevarra, and Joanne Rondilla collected studies of literature regarding mixed-race and multiraciality in the United States. They begin the conversation about racial landscape, as a means to understand race

⁵⁴ Ibid., 166.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 167.

⁵⁶ Rondilla, Joanne L., Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul Spickard, eds. *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*. New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2017, 140.

⁵⁷ Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 167.

itself. Since multiracial people are vastly growing, the idea of pure-race is disputable; however, racism distinctly classifies which groups are superior and inferior.

The hierarchy of racial categories was classified by Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus. He organized humankind in a pyramid scheme falsely dictating Whites as superiorly beautiful, intelligent, and acceptable over all other races with Blacks at the bottom (Paul Spickard, Rudy Guevarra, and Joanne Rondilla, 2017)⁵⁸.

| Systema Naturae | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|
| Races | Nosce te ipsum | Temperaments |
| Europaeus albesc[ens] | sanguine, pale, muscular, swift, clever, inventive, governed by laws | optimistic |
| Americanus rubesc[ens] | choleric, copper colored, straightforward, eager, combative, governed by customs | angry |
| Asiaticus fuscus | melancholic, yellow, inflexible, severe, avaricious, dark-eyed, governed by opinions | melancholy |
| Africanus nigr[iculus] | phlegmatic, black, slow, relaxed, negligent, governed by impulse | sluggish |

The chart depicts the historiography of race created by Linnaeus and other European naturalists and anthropologists, a false concept of race that has been perpetuated

⁵⁸Rondilla, Joanne L., Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul Spickard, eds. *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*. New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2017, 5.

throughout history⁵⁹. This pseudoreality of science perpetuates an erroneous differentiation between races, disregarding that we are all in fact human beings, and more so, excludes the idea of multiracial identities. “Mixed people were treated as defective and inferior to their separate and supposedly pure parent stocks, and predicted weakness, ugliness, infertility, and tortured self-doubt in successive generations of mixing (Paul Spickard, Rudy Guevarra, and Joanne Rondilla, 2017)⁶⁰.” So before a conversation about uniting races as one through the exploration of mixed race identities, we have to understand that a differentiation of race is a social construct and racism a social fact. Subsequently, we cannot imagine an idealist view of embracing race and mixed raced people without tackling the factors of racism, as Ronald David Glass states:

Race cannot be ignored as a conceptual framework because of its theoretical inadequacy for capturing the phenomenon of race, nor because of its simplistic use of reified notions for historically dynamic meanings and practices. Nor can the politics of race be transcended by a mental act of some sort (like a change in belief, or an act of will) nor wished away in a fantasy of color blindness. Race matters..., we argue for a focus of attention on the continuing significance and changing meaning of race...to be linked with projects engaged in contesting that very significance and meaning...But an even stronger challenge to race can come from people at the margins to all racial centers; that is, from people expressive of

⁵⁹Müller-Wille, Staffan. (2014). Race and History: Comments from an Epistemological Point of View. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 39(4), 597–606.

⁶⁰Rondilla, Joanne L., Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul Spickard, eds. *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*. New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2017, 7.

multiracial existence and evident human variation, who resist efforts to be subdued and brought within racial orders⁶¹.

Discerning mainstream society's ideologies about race inordinately demands an essential way of thinking about race, without disputing its significance and the significance of racism. Moreover, there are factors that prohibit a progressive way of thinking about race; which Scholar Rebecca Romo (2017)⁶² evaluates in her study, policing racial/ethnic authenticity among Blaxicans in the United States. Romo (2017) studied interactions between monoracial people of color and mixed race people, she explored how racial/ethnic authenticity policing is at the core development of new or post-civil rights hybrid racial/ethnic identities. A person who identifies as Blaxican is both Black and Mexican American, they as Romo states emerge their intersectionality as one; however, confined—monoraciality claiming authenticity of either groups, “Individuals act at the risk of being evaluated with regard to their essential natures... They articulate a connection to two separate histories of racial oppression. Rather than choose between two racial/ethnic minority identities, Blaxicans choose both (Rebecca Romo, 2017)⁶³.” Situated between racial/ethnic authenticity and intersectionality are dynamics of power that Blaxicans from different backgrounds face within racial realities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexuality). For instance, Blaxican females may experience more or less different forms of suppression than their male counters and vis-a-vis. Interestingly, what is undeniably similar in the experiences of Blaxicans are duality of representing two ethnic minorities that have been

⁶¹ Ibid., 7.

⁶² Ibid., 127.

⁶³ Ibid., 128.

socially, economically, and politically disadvantaged for generations (Rebecca, 2017)⁶⁴. Blaxicans choose both as a way of embracing a “non-hierarchical valuation” of one group over the other, because both groups are simultaneously positioned in the racial hierarchy as inferior and have encompassed similar elements of marginalization. “Blaxican identities and experiences within the borderlands, a site for political, historical, and sexual consciousness for appreciating the coming together of different cultures...yet have conflicting feelings (Rebecca Romo, 2017)⁶⁵.” Those conflict of feelings arise from a policing racial/ethnic authenticity, a social interaction that occurs when an inside member of a racial/ethnic group challenges another’s claim to authenticity and belonging through assumptions about their race, class, and gender (Rebecca Romo, 2017)⁶⁶. Such power dynamic promulgates a constant assertiveness for one to prove their racial/ethnic authenticity, to an autonomized group that values monoraciality. Romo interviewed Blaxican woman confronted with microaggressions of policing authenticity, for example: hair texture, skin color, Spanish fluency, and hip-hop dancing were some markers of racial/ethnic authenticity. Blaxicans demonstrate a desire to prove racial/ethnic authenticity—to be accepted and prove their knowledge about Blackness or Mexican culture. “Policing racial/ethnic boundaries is about protecting monoracial statuses as they were defined in the civil rights era and has gender implications (Rebecca Romo, 2017)⁶⁷.” Rather an amalgamated organization, policing racial/ethnic authenticity limits

⁶⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 137.

the boundaries of crossing. Monoraciality reinforces the racist categorization institutionalized by Whites. Fortunately, participants in Romo's (2017)⁶⁸ study were unwilling to compromise one group over the other despite being interrogated about their identities—they crafted an identity that blended both. This asserts Romo's (2017)⁶⁹ argument that authentic policing within ethnic groups is counterproductive and insignificant. "It impedes the advancement of coethnics' positions within the larger social and economic structure." Blaxican identities have the fluidity of embracing both racial and ethnic perspectives, they do experience common struggles of either group; yet, within the same space they experience an entirely new struggle for authenticity. Thereby, how we understand mixed race identities can build toward a collective that encompasses similar goals.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 138.

Chapter Three: Methods and Results

Research Design and Rationale

The premise of the research is to provide additional knowledge of what scholars consider a way for Black and Latinx to coalesce a collective cooperation against the marginalization and disenfranchisement of both minority groups. The proposal that the medium for connecting such groups as one is understanding mixed race identities; they interlock between a blend of both groups—identifying as being both. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with Blaxican and Mixed raced adults in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles Area, in hopes that the answers given can extend the understanding about mixed race identities and examine alternative approaches to identity development for Afro-Latinx youth. The research combined different methods of: ethnographic observation, semi-structured interviews, and surveys. The research design was qualitative, the narrative methods were in the form of interviews and surveys with the intention to follow the question wording and question order exactly and to record responses exactly as they are given (Babbie, 1975⁷⁰; Maxwell, 2013)⁷¹.

Research Domain and Data Sources

This research was carried out in multiple settings, in order, to gain access and engage with the Afro-Latinx community members and/or professionals. The initial plan was to research and observe International Schools and community organizing spaces.

Unfortunately, access was difficult to obtain and/or participation in either one of the

⁷⁰ Babbie, Earl. 1975. "The Ethics and Politics of Social Research" in *The Basics of Social Research*. Chapter 3, pg.65-91.

⁷¹ Maxwell, Joseph (2013) *Qualitative Research: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

surveys, because of long-term commitments and restrictions on certain research conducted in schools. From there, the decision had been to contact various school organizations with a multicultural department or social group. There was difficulty with communication via email or telephone that complicated connecting with anyone to receive information.

Eventually, new avenues were found for finding participants for the study. I conducted ethnographic observations of three community events, fifteen semi-structured interviews, and fifteen surveys. Participatory observation was conducted at community events like Oakland's First Friday, hosted every first Friday of the month in the KONO district on Telegraph. There coming across a vendor selling Afro-Latinx inspired jewelry and scarves, the creator wanted to be interviewed. They also agreed to connect and reach out to other Afro-Latinx individuals who would be interested in being interviewed. From that point on, referrals to the next person were made and so forth; all by word of mouth—the majority of interviewees received were through networks and their connections. I used snowball sampling, finding one person who met the research criteria and having them refer others who might participate (Lavarkas, 2008)⁷². I sought participants to interview who met the following criteria:

- self-identified as African-American/Black, Latina/o/x or a combination
- having either one parent who is Afro-Latinx; or one parent who is African-American/Black and one parent who is Latina/o/x
- adults (18 and older)

⁷² Lavrakas, Paul (2008). *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications.

As part of the ethnographic method, participatory observation happened at two events: First event, “Afrolituation’s 1 year Anniversary,” an event hosted by Afrolituation (an African Entertainment Group) and Amplify Africa (an innovative investment and economic company for African related projects). Afrolituation is a monthly Los Angeles African experience event located on Sunset Boulevard, it celebrates African diaspora through music and fashion. The aim of this method was to observe and interact with people in attendance at a cultural event that encompassed the African diaspora, including the Afro-Latinx community. After attending these events, I composed field notes with as much detail as possible in what was observed and experienced were written earlier that day. An impressive number of people attended the event, the topic resonated for most people and it was positive to see so many artists and non-profit community groups bring awareness to a subject that greatly affects impoverished youth.

Another avenue for the research data source came from using social media, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Researcher Dimpal Jain (2010) found that using social networking sites was an unconventional method; however, it provided her with greater access and communication. “Instant message chatting, and text messaging for communication, recruitment, and information posting...are vital for communicative measures; yet, few studies have detailed how to use them as method (i.e., how to use them not to collect additional data on participants and the ethical issues that may accompany that, but, rather, as a way to communicate instead of by phone, e-mail, and/or in-person) (Dimpal Jain, 2010)⁷³.”

⁷³ Jain, Dimpal. 2010. Critical Race Theory and Community Colleges: Through the Eyes of Women Student Leaders of Color. *Community College Journal of Research and Practices*. 83.

Research was conducted in July through September 2017, and using social media platforms were not only faster, but more effective in getting people to participate. Data sources began by searching Afro-Latinx groups on Facebook, to gain access and have the chance to present the research topic. The groups were private and by invite only, so it was decided to search companies or any associations with Afro-Latinx. Later searches found a Facebook page for a Afro-Latinx television production; which transferred to the main site where the executive producer could be contacted through e-mail using LinkedIn. Facebook also led to emailing several Afro-Latinx photographers, journalists and professors, all were emailed by using their LinkedIn profiles—that helped in verifying their credentials. Close friends and family were contacted in order to connect and network, from there five participants were willing to help. Instagram was the main social media platform for collecting the majority of participants for the study. A Instagram page called “Blaxicans of LA,” is similar to how “Humans of New York” is formatted, Blaxicans of Los Angeles captures two cultures of which people have the fluidity of being both. Photographer and researcher Walter Thompson-Hernandez wanted a platform to address the narrative of mixed race identities, specifically Black and Mexican, in a society and state where race is discussed between Blacks and Whites.

As requested, eleven individuals that Thompson-Hernandez photographed were direct messaged and asked if they would be interested in being interviewed and surveyed; each person responded back agreeing to do the study, but only three actually participated. To reiterate, using social media networking sites as way to communicate instead of by

phone, e-mail, and/or in-person, was more effective in recruiting participants and faster in getting responses from individuals.

Data Collection

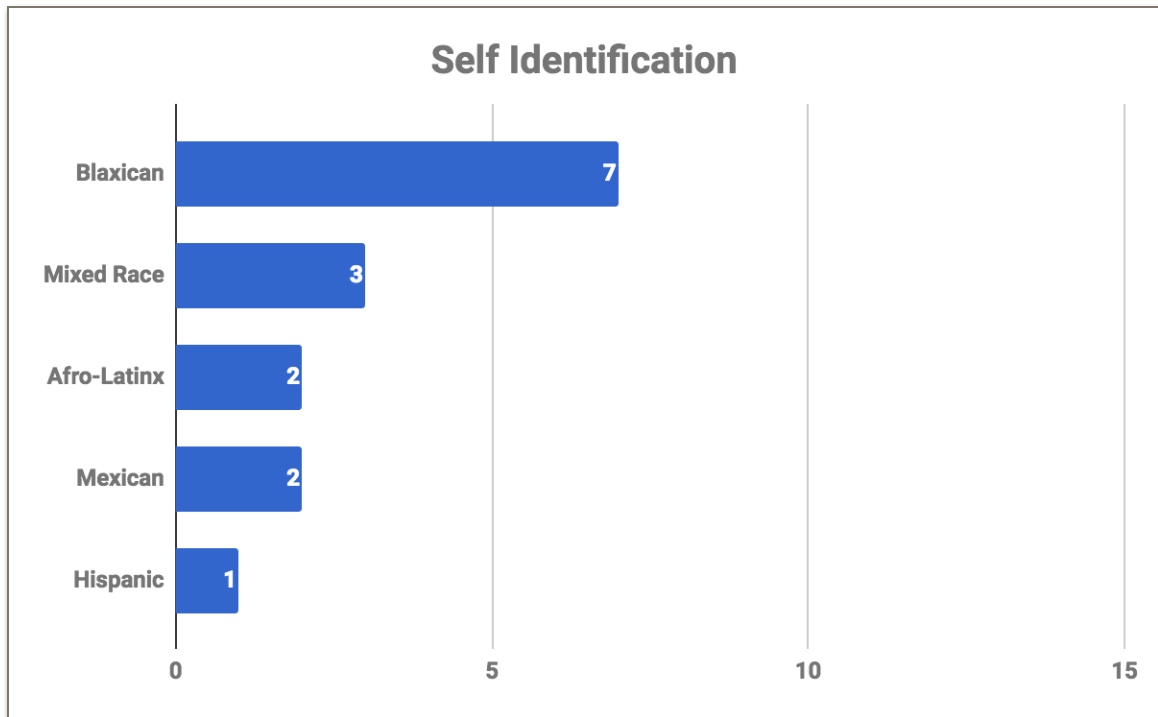
The course of data observation and collection was conducted over the summer between one and three months. Fifteen participants were interviewed and surveyed for a duration of forty-five minutes. The interview questions took about thirty minutes to finish, and fifteen minutes to complete the survey. Participatory observation were conducted at three different community organized spaces. The first community event was in July located in Oakland, CA., Oakland's First Friday, attendance was for three hours—while field notes were being written in 'Notes' via iPhone about how the general engagement and participants at the event along with any interesting observations experienced. Within the first hour of attendance, the author came across an Afro-Latin inspired shop ran by a woman who identified as Blaxican. After a few questions about why she identified as Blaxican and her background, she was asked for an interview and she quickly agreed. She also introduced the author to another vendor who was Afro-Colombian, and she was asked if she would also be interested in the study. The August and September Oakland First Friday's were opportunities to follow-up with the vendors and ask any additional questions, mostly to ask if they could connect me with more people. The notes gathered from the three months in attendance, highlighted the number of Afro-Latinx vendors, compared to the majority that were either Black or Latino inspired. Afro-Latina vendors embraced both their heritages, with style and color inspired by the their Black and Latin roots. During the two hours of attendance at the Afrolituation

event, it was observed how African and Latin ancestry were celebrated within a space that allowed individuals to express themselves freely without being judged. Participants wore clothing that represented their country and danced to multiple songs that were Afro-Latin influenced. The Schools-Not-Prisons event, the participatory observation was for four hours, listening to the different Imagine Justice speakers, Devon Franklin and Van Jones talk about the grassroots initiatives that advocate for justice and education—to engage with youth to become active leaders in their communities, to be positive role models despite the many systemic issues low-income communities experience. Throughout these community organized spaces, it was observed how the Black and Latinx community are able to come together to create something productive and meaningful.

Oakland's First Friday and Afrolituation are spaces in which individuals can celebrate and showcase their identity. The Schools-Not-Prisons is a collective initiative of multiple community centers and groups that educate youth through public education about mass incarceration. The movement is strong incorporating youth and education as means to bring about change, especially in underprivileged communities. The Schools-Not-Prisons campaign, is considered to be an operation that motivates youth identity development, instilling in young Blacks and Latinx that they can fight against being another statistic, empowering them to use their agency to vote against a system that is white-centered. In conducting the semi-structured interviews, it was necessary to search for individuals willing to speak about Black and Latinx identity development. Since securing individual participation was difficult, the decision was made to give participants

the flexibility of being interviewed by telephone or email. The participants of the study are working professionals and/or full-time students, so meeting in-person for a thirty minute interview was unlikely. A list of participant emails were collected, in order to message them about available time slots for a telephone interview, the interview questions were provided in the email along with the survey—giving the option to send back their responses all in one.

The data collection involved examining a select demographic, participants who self-identified as mixed race, either having one parent or both who are Afro-Latinx. Fifteen adult participants were interviewed over the phone for thirty minutes, thus following up with asking them to fill out a fifteen minute survey. The general themes of the interview questions concerned perceptions about Black and Latinx identity, narratives about Afro-Latinx identity, the role of k-12 schooling in learning about multiracial identity, and what experiences either at home or outside change perspectives about mixed race identity. The survey questionnaire form included the eight interview questions, but incorporated five more questions regarding the role identity, and the role of civic engagement, community organizations, cultural events in cultural identity development. Although the study requested participants who self-identified as mixed race, either having one parent or both who are Afro-Latinx, and recruited individuals interested in talking about Afro-Latinx identity—four out of fifteen participants answered differently than expected on how they self-identified.



There were seven Blaxicans, three Mixed Race, two Afro-Latinx, two Mexican, one Hispanic; eleven females and four males; the participants' age ranged from nineteen to forty-four, the majority were between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine years old; and twelve participants were situated in the Los Angeles area and three in the San Francisco Bay Area.

| Name | Gender | Age | Racial Self-Identification | National/Countries of Origin | Education | Employment |
|----------|--------|-----|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Mara | Female | 25 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Shop Owner |
| Anderson | Male | 27 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Magazine Editor |
| Beth | Female | 25 | Hispanic | Mexico & US | College BA | Full-Time Student |
| Nancy | Female | 19 | Mexican | Mexico & US | College BA | Starbucks Barista |
| Zion | Female | 23 | Mexican | Mexico & US | College BA | Full-Time Student |

| Name | Gender | Age | Racial Self-Identification | National/Countries of Origin | Education | Employment |
|-----------|--------|-----|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Leon | Male | 44 | Mixed Race | Cuba & US | College BA | Executive Producer |
| Linda | Female | 25 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Full-Time Student |
| Harmony | Female | 28 | Afro-Latina | Guatemala & US | College BA | Social Worker |
| Lauren | Female | 24 | Afro-Latina | Venezuela & US | College BA | Aviation Resource Manger |
| Stella | Female | 25 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Stay-at-home Mom |
| Alejandro | Male | 26 | Mixed Race | N/A | College BA | Counselor |
| Dianna | Female | 22 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Full-Time Student |
| Dustin | Male | 39 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Model |
| Cece | Female | 31 | Blaxican | Mexico & US | College BA | Business Manger |
| Maria | Female | 26 | Mixed Race | Puerto Rico & US | College BA | Plumbing Certification Agency |

The majority of the participants are working professionals (i.e., shop owners, magazine editor, executive producer, social worker, business manager) and/or full-time students in college. Generally, all participant's country of origin answered the United States—they being first or second generation—with the exception of where their parents are from like Venezuela, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. Regarding participants who self-identified as either just Mexican, Hispanic, or American; they portrayed physical traits similar to someone with African ancestry. Scholar Ariel E. Dulitzky, relates this idea of whitening or infusing white blood in society and disregarding African ancestry or indigenous roots, because mixed race theory or acknowledging non-white normative

disrupts racist policy. “Latin America countries made a concerted effort to bring down the number of Blacks and indigenous people in the population and, as a last resort, to camouflage these racial groups by encouraging miscegenation, or marriage between nonwhites and Whites, to make the population whiter (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁷⁴.” Dzidzienyo and Oboler explain that in order to climb the social ladder, one must be as white as possible—maybe this relates to why racial identity is subjective. The survey indicates that individual expression about race is different and complex, more so, that a discussion about race is a long overdue conversation in our society.

Furthermore, the initial research was to observe Afro-Latinx adult identity construction in community organized spaces, it was anticipated that experiencing a gender over or under-representation could affect the information collected and the amount of time it took to collect the data. However, due to complications with gaining access to schools and community organized spaces; it was decided to review Afro-Latinx adult identity construction. The advantage of changing demographic resulted in having substantial feedback and responses from adults recounting their own experiences with identity—that having a younger sample would mean more time needed to develop or process. Subsequently, adult participants have more obligations and time constraints that made scheduling an interview quite difficult. Surprisingly, participants who answered the interview questions also efficiently answered the survey questions as well.

⁷⁴ Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 10.

Results

The ethnographic notes from the participatory observations revealed the Afro-Latinx individuals when provided with an outlet to experience their identity and heritage, is something of a celebration. Secondly, when Blacks and Latinos unite under a common struggle, people are receptive; considering how great these two groups are together in solidarity, can be a powerful force. At the Afrolituation event, the hall where it took place was decorated with flags from every country in Africa and also including South America and the Caribbean Islands, representing Afro-Latinx, Afro-Mexicans, Afro-Caribbeans. The music was loud and the people were dancing, every time a new song played either African reggae, Latin pop, tropical, bachata or merengue people cheered and rushed to the dance floor. Some men and women were dressed in African textile clothing; they showed-off style and represented their country. In practice, the pride and joy people had for their country and heritage was celebrated within a community of people. It was safe place to express and support one another as a whole. The announcer shouted out countries to see how many people were represented, “Puerto Rico! Ethiopia! Jamaica!”

The second event, #Schools-Not-Prisons Tour, is a free music and art tour that focuses on the mass incarceration problem in California. The campaign works with community groups to bolster young people to vote on the safety, justice and peace innovates to permit the overspending of people of color put in prisons. On August 25, 2017, the campaign was hosted at Capitol Mall in Sacramento, CA., nearly 25,000 people attended that day to fight for justice against juvenile and mass incarceration. The Afro-Panamanian music duo group called Los Rakas performed at the event. The duo are from

Oakland, CA. and were one of the many artists that came to show support, along with Syncopated Ladies, Andra Day, Goapele, J Cole, and Common. The event had ‘Imagine Justice’ speakers, who talked about the support and teamwork needed to build to fight against youth abandonment in prisons. Speakers like Devon Franklin and Van Jones spoke about the realities facing people of color who come from underprivileged and low-income communities; youth are the main targets for an institution that profits off their imprisonment. Community centers, immigrant and refugee detention centers (e.g., Black Alliance, National Council of La Raza, Raices Cultura, ACLU, EBAYC, etc.) each had a representative talk about the extreme circumstances for change, one that envisions the investment in young people to aspire change. While observing the environment and subjects of the study, the method called ‘recalling in order to write was performed (Emerson et al., 1995)⁷⁵.’

One important thing to mention, a military veteran at the Schools-Not-Prisons and talked about how some people including youth once they have been incarcerated, they need proper mental health support during and after their term. She told a story about her friend who suffered from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan, he became violent with his wife and was sent to prison for thirty years for assault charges. As a Black male, the courts dismissed his time in the military and the fact that he suffered from PTSD; he received no mental health support. For Black and Latino youth who are charged life sentences for petty crimes, it has a great affect on their development and mental psyche. The conditions of the environment we live in affect our chances and opportunities within

⁷⁵ (Emerson et al., 1995)

society. Drugs and violence are prevalent in any community or neighborhood, but for low-income communities police enforcement are more likely to arrest a Black or Latino. For people of color, stop and frisk by police can be a mundane practice that happens often just because of how one looks, so its imperative that mental health be accounted for when understanding identity construction and development.

Black Resilience and Black Struggle

The interview and survey questions facilitated considerable information for how identity development and construction is recognized by Afro-Latinx adult participants. The first question, what does it mean to you to be Black, provided an array of responses from strong opinions about Black or Black resilience and beauty to the struggle, fight, and revolutionary discourse of Black history and culture. One in fifteen participant responses had positive views on being Black. There seemed to be a common understanding and/or relation to the ‘Black struggle,’ to work twice as hard than any other race. However, despite this idea of being strong and resilient there is a strong sense of pride for Black people and people of the diaspora. The question about what does it mean to be Latinx, the feedback received associated mixed races and cultures with what it means to be Latinx. That the term ‘Latin’ seems to imply a purebred, Euro-centric identity, yet for the individuals who responded to this question, it means more than pride and self-preservation. It involves an open expression of accepting the many roots that make up the Latin culture and community. A significant number of responses concluded that Latinx means a strong sense of cultural, family, and traditions. On the other hand, four out of fifteen participant responses had negative experiences and/or views on being

Latinx. One aspect of that was for some individuals, who felt more closely to one particular culture or race than the other. Also, they had experienced racism from one side of the family. A participant who relates to being Latina more than Black explains that she grew up in the Latin culture. Both parents either third-generation or have indigenous roots from Guatemala, raised their children within the culture and tradition. Another participant strongly related to the Venezuelan heritage; however, is not involved with the Latino community because of an estranged relationship with her father. A few responses commented on how Latin America has a lot of racism, because of the societal non acceptance of indigenous people and African ancestry. This was especially intriguing for mixed-raced individuals; they have the fluidity of choosing either identity or culture, based off any factor, they have flexibility of association—Thompson-Hernandez includes perceptions of race for Blaxicans really challenge the way we think about race and force us to think about racial identities in more inclusive and broad ways. “Blaxicans are dual minorities. We represent two of the largest ethnic minority groups. (*Los Angeles Times*, 2015)⁷⁶.” Thompson-Hernandez (2015) distinguishes that the so-called traditional sets of issues and challenges Black or Latino people face cannot be described for Blaxicans. Afro-Latinx, Blaxican, and/or Mixed Raced individuals exist in a multitude of social and racial worlds. It is imperative that we understand how these individuals navigate different worlds and contexts, whether that be racial, linguistic, culinary or musical. The question about what it means to be multiracial, seven participants commented about having the advantage to being both as something positive. Despite, mixed race individuals

⁷⁶ Bailey, Ebony. "Blaxicans of L.A.: capturing two cultures in one." *The Los Angeles Times*. July 21, 2015.

understanding the struggles of both groups, they can associate with different cultures other than their own. And in spite of racial tension and turmoil, Mixed race identities are proof that racism and racial prejudice are inconsistent and constructed biases—due to the proliferation of interracial marriages (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁷⁷. Participants seem to be empathetic towards other cultures, with a response to understanding their roots and cultural identity allows for one to lead with love and not pass judgment—in a society where racism is still present.

Afro-Latinx Experiences Across School, Home, and Community Spaces

The participants of the study expressed how Blackness and Latinx identity were perceived in school as either a problem or an insignificant marker in history. Six in fifteen participants recalled that Black identity was only attributed to slavery and how Mexico lost land to the US, they were portrayed as weak against the superior Europeans and less the victims of a stifled moment in history. Participants commented how they felt we were being taught what felt like a white curriculum—a sanitized version of history. It's important to mention that the majority of participants experienced a cultural separation between Blacks and Latinos in school. Some participants felt that Latinos were more accepted or “exotic” than Blacks, who were considered as being “negative” or trouble makers. Individuals who identify as mixed race faced racism and ignorance about their background, a misunderstood and displaced form of stereotypes about their perceived identity. Six in fifteen participants expressed how they felt separated from either the Blacks or Latinos in school because of their mixed race identity. The question about if

⁷⁷ Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 265.

schools should incorporate more education about Blacks and Latinos, was displayed on a likert scale with '1 strongly disagree' to '5 strongly agree,' 70 percent of participants answered strongly agree. This question was followed by what participants wished they would have learned about race and multiracial identities; many of the responses included an education system that doesn't center whiteness and incorporates the richness of other cultures. Participants expressed that any studies taught about Blacks or Latinos involved slavery and/or excluded the struggles that both groups share together; yet, wished to learn more about activist groups that progressed changed throughout history for Blacks and Latinos. It was noticed that for some participants the topic about race was rarely a conversation given at home or at school.

For some participants families of either the Black or Latinx side were estranged, so any talk about Afro-Latinx history was absent. Moreover, the majority of households by default were raised in the Latino culture. Although for most participants they were told to have pride in their culture, race was not a topic in the home and seldom at school. Despite, the lack of conversations about race and identity in the home, ten in fifteen participants agreed that having those conversations about race helped shape their identity. Participants attributed their identity and knowing who they are and come from, from the presence of having conversations or discussions about race. It gave them a sense of pride and for some avoided feeling like a stereotype—because they were able to embrace who they are without feeling too “urban” or cultured. Nearly half of the participants either attended community organized spaces, programs, and/or events where individuals looked and/or identified the same as them. They explained that these community spaces were

influential in shaping their identity. For most participants those spaces were: at home, church, school or college, the military, and/or social groups. Although, the spaces mentioned were not a community space, they are nevertheless an important environment. These spaces taught participants to have a different mindset and accept being different rather than conform to a singular normative. The home was where some participants experienced the struggle and diversity of both cultures. The church allowed for some participants to connect with their African roots (i.e., through the religious practice of Santeria), and school/college re-defined for participants what Black and Latinx identity means—either through a sorority, social group, or attending a college with predominately more Black and Latinx students; participants discovered their identity in accepting their differences.

Afro-Latinx Adulthood and Careers

Since the research seeks to understand how Afro-Latinx adult identity construction can be developed, participants were asked how their experiences with race changed as they entered adulthood or in their professional career. Fourteen out of fifteen participants agreed that their nativity towards race evolved as they got older and entered into the work force. So many of them expressed that a lot of corporate America is still heavily white, and that they experience white privilege or racial prejudice so often in their professional careers. Mixed raced or Afro-Latinx in this society is conveyed as a disadvantage for what participants explain, is a concept of race and racism that still painfully exists. Participants are aware of the treatment they receive by either Latino co-workers or customers and white colleagues and supervisors—differences on their ability

to speak Spanish in front of other Latinos and receiving opportunities and/or criticism from white colleagues or supervisors. Nineteen year old Isabel (ie. Names changed for confidentiality) had this to say, “I had racist experiences when I started the work force. Working in the food industry, I had customers that wouldn't want me to talk to them because I was Mexican. It just confirmed to me that racism is of course still alive today and will happen to everyone. I definitely noticed White Privilege as well. The white workers wouldn't get backlash like the rest of us.” These experiences inordinately affected participants perspective on race and racism and how they treat others. Thirteen in fifteen participants said their professional careers either directly or indirectly impacts the Black and Latinx community and for the most part affects the way they associate with other cultures. Noteworthy, participants who are shop owners, social workers, or work at a school; they mentioned that their influence and identity as mixed race or Afro-Latinx is a greater representation for individuals in the Black and Latinx community. Finally, the last question asked to participants—does having a strong sense of identity affect their overall engagement and civic participation within their community; twelve out of fifteen participants answered yes. Participants said their identity allows them to navigate within a society that hasn't accepted them or at least racism in this county. They mentioned that their identity permits them to advocate and communicate with similar individuals to make a positive change.

The findings of this research centered on themes of race and ethnic identity representation in school, policing racial/ethnic authenticity, and identity linked to civic participation. In general, participants of the study agreed that schools and education

should incorporate more education about Blacks and Latinx as well as multiracial identities.

Anderson, a twenty-seven year old Blaxican male spoke about the responsibility education has when teaching about identity:

“I believe the education system has the responsibility to teach about a number of identities and that this could be achieved in part by teaching history that doesn't center whiteness, that doesn't preclude people of color, that isn't unnecessarily celebratory of America and it's white roots without giving due credit to the Black, Latinx, Native American, Asian backbone.”

Mixed race and Afro-Latinx identity representation is crucial in terms of youth identity construction. Linda, a twenty-five year old Blaxican female, talked about her experience growing up in a predominately Mexican neighborhood and apart from being the only Blaxican in school; she felt ashamed about her physical differences and expressed:

“While growing up, I never saw someone that looked like me on television, film or in real life. One girl in high school has half black-and-white and had curly hair like me, but we really didn't resemble each other. People [students and teachers] put us in the same category just because we were both half black. Since I was a little girl, I never wore my hair curly. I always straighten it because I wanted to fit in with everyone else and not be different. My hometown was extremely judgmental and my parents never pushed me to be myself physically. I think going to a college where there were predominately more Black people made me more comfortable with myself since I saw more people looked like me.”

Scholars Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn (2006), discuss how multicultural education in a pluralistic society is plausible when educators realize that race and ethnicity has an impact on the communication and interactions with students; “Students of color are reminded by others of their race on almost a daily basis as they face discriminatory practices and attitudes. Rather than pretend that race and ethnicity do not exist, teachers should acknowledge the differences and be aware of ways culture can influence learning (Gollnick and Chinn, 2006)⁷⁸.” These discriminatory practices and attitudes are what Scholar Rebecca Romo define as policing racial/ethnic authenticity. Two participants of the study explain how they felt ostracized in the Latin community. Alejandro, a twenty-six year old Mixed race male, describes how his background is Latino yet he feels unaccepted in the Latino community, “It’s hard for Hispanics to accept me in their culture because of the color of my skin being dark, so I never felt accepted by them. So I always tell myself I’m in a different category.” Romo described how Mexican American perceptions of Blackness are influenced by racial attitudes and ideas transmitted from Mexico and the United States; although Mexican-descent people have African ancestry and African influences cultures, the national rhetoric of mestizaje or the process of racial mixing has convinced many that they are all mestizas/os of one race, and African ancestry is often denied and ignored (Rebecca Romo cited in Rondilla, Guevarra, and Spickard, 2017)⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn. 2005. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. Prentice Hall; 7 edition. 111.

⁷⁹Rondilla, Joanne L., Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul Spickard, eds. *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*. New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2017, 133.

Dianna, a twenty-two year old Blaxican female, talked about her agency where she is pressurized to speak Spanish fluently within the Latinx community, “Honestly I don’t really relate to my Mexican side. My outer appearance screams Latina, but my inner being screams Black. I think it all falls on the fact that my mother is Black, and she was a single parent raising me and my siblings. The stigma I get from being Latina, is that I should know Spanish. Unfortunately I wasn’t taught by my father who is Mexican, so I only know a small amount of Spanish. I know that being Latina means having a close tight knit relationship with your family, which I don’t.” Multiple social factors are taken in account when thinking about Afro-Latinx identity, their background and upbringing and overall experiences with race—each have an influence on how individuals perceive race and their own identity. “Racism and race relations operate in specific environments and sociopolitical contexts and thus are subject to multiple variations, for example, timing of immigration, nationalities, class, and incorporation into the US economy (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁸⁰.” For instance Maria, a twenty-six year old Mixed race female talked about her experience with other Black people, “I have light skin and long hair and they [Black people] tended to dismiss me and say I wasn’t Black enough. Hispanics never did that to me. Latinos know that we come in all colors and shapes. To them I wasn’t mixed. I was Latina. I think that made me have a natural gravitation to the Latina side of my roots and identify a bit more Latina than Black.” Like Maria, participants also expressed not talking about race at home; which others commented on how those conversations helped shaped their identity because they felt they knew who

⁸⁰ Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (2005), 159.

they were and came from. In the case of Maria's experience, Romo talked about policing racial/ethnic authenticity, where monoracial groups certify markers that make-up the culture, thus pressuring mixed race individuals to authenticate their identity. Scholars Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005)⁸¹ mention that such authentic policing weakens coalition between Black-Latinx relations because of Blacks unwillingness to recognize experiences of racial groups other than the US-born Black experiences. Some opposing race-relation arguments state that Whites have more in common with Blacks than with Latinx; however, public opinion data show that Blacks and Latinas/os are far closer on most issues than either are to Whites (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005)⁸².

Civic and Community Engagement

The last theme found in this study is identity linked to civic participation. The majority of participants, except two, said having a strong sense of identity affects their overall engagement and civic participation within their community. Mara, a twenty-five year old Blaxican female is the shop owner that was met during Oakland's First Friday; she said her work has somewhat of an impact on the Black and Latinx community, "I connect to my communities through my work and my overall sense of connection to those communities." Anderson is a magazine editor, who also dedicates his time as an advocate for Black and Latinx rights, "Relating to the experiences and struggles that people who look like me deal with helps me to empathize with being marginalized and motivates to become mobilized to fight against that marginalization." A strong sense of

⁸¹ Ibid., 265.

⁸² Ibid., 268.

identity encourages Afro-Latinx adults to become role models in their communities and use their agency to fight against policies that disenfranchise them. According to Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005)⁸³ as more countries respond to the struggle of neoliberalism, it is incumbent upon Blacks and Latinx in the United States to encourage respect for democracy.

⁸³ Ibid., 276.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Afro-Latinx adults construct and define their identity on their own terms. They encompass a variety into the wholeness of their identity. It's a nuance way of conceptualizing identity, a coalescing of two identities as one. Afro-Latinx experience and connect with the common struggle of both racial groups. These experiences are developed in school, at home, and in the workplace through race-relations. Afro-Latinx adults relate strongly with the Black struggle and the pride of the Latino culture; however, may gravitate to one side more based on relationships with family members or other monoracial individuals that police the authenticity of their identity. Adults that are both Black and Latinx, can identify as the immersion of one identity (e.g., Blaxican, Afro-Latinx, or Mixed Race). Afro-Latinx identity development in k-12 schooling is challenged by the affects of neoliberal reforms to education. As a strong emphasis on performance and standardized tests— areas where funding is limited—schools are bombarded with stipulations and restrain from a critical cultural relevant pedagogy to a teaching environment that focuses on accountability. The role of k-12 school inhibit mixed-race identity construction of Afro-Latinx adults. For Afro-Latinx adults, what shaped their identity were spaces they felt comfortable in expressing themselves freely, for example, at home, church, school or college, the military, and/or social group. A suggestion would be to bolster youth initiatives within their community though community organized spaces; whether that be through church, events, or social groups— strong mentorship from adults or other youth can construct a community identity that fosters individual identity construction. According to scholars Shawn Ginwright, Pedro

Noguera, and Julio Cammarota (2006)⁸⁴ building youth activism is a way for youth to understand policy and affect change in their communities—all social discourse particularly those about Black and Latinx people and poverty, are engaged in the ideological struggle to define identity and construct community, mentorship in urban communities as related to development of social capital in these areas.

⁸⁴Shawn Ginwright, Pedro Noguera, and Julio Cammarota, “Youth Agency, Resistance, and Civic Activism: The Public Commitment to Social Justice,” in *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change* (Routledge, 2006), 86.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions: 30mins

1. What are your perceptions of Black or Blackness?
2. What are your perceptions of latino, latina, and/or latinx?
3. If so, how has being mixed race apart of your identity?
4. What were the narratives or perceptions of Black/latinx in school?
5. What do you wish you would have learned in school about race and multiracial identities?
6. What were the ways that Blackness or Latinx identity was talked about at home?
Were these experiences different from those of school?
7. What spaces or experiences were the most influential in shaping your identity?
8. Did your understandings or experiences of race change as you entered adulthood or your professional career? Can you explain or think of examples?

Appendix B

Survey Questions: 15mins

1. What does it mean to you to be Black?
2. What does it mean to be Latinx?
3. What does it mean to you to be both?
4. How were Blackness and Latinx identity perceived in school?
5. Do you think schools should incorporate more education about Blacks and Latinos? (i.e. participants answered using a likert scale)
6. What do you wish you would have learned in school about race and multiracial identities?
7. What were the ways that Blackness or Latinx identity was talked about at home?
Were these experiences different from those of school?
8. If so, how does that conversation shape your identity?
9. Did you ever participate or attend a community organized space (e.g., church, after-school program, community-led programs and/or events) where individuals looked the same as you?
10. What spaces or experiences were the most influential in shaping your identity?
11. Did your understandings or experiences of race change as you entered adulthood or your professional career? Can you explain or think of examples?
12. How does your work impact Blacks and Latinos?
13. Does having a strong sense of identity affect your overall engagement and civic participation within your community?